

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USUN NEW YORK 894

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TAGS: PINT, SCUL, PFOR, SF

SUBJ: VORSTER SPEAKS OF MAJOR CHANGES IN SA WITHIN
NEXT TWELVE MONTHS

GABORONE ALSO FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY EASUM

1. IN WHAT IS BILLED HERE AS HIS SECOND MAJOR POLICY SPEECH

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IN PAST TWO WEEKS

PRIME MINISTER VORSTER, SPEAKING TO NATIONAL PARTY SUPPORTERS IN HIS NIGEL CONSTITUENCY NOVEMBER 5, FOCUSED ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS. CONSIDERABLE PORTION OF SPEECH WAS DEVOTED TO RHODESIA AND MOZAMBIQUE (SEPTTEL), BUT HE DID MAKE BRIEF REFERENCE TO POSSIBTE CHANGES TO INTERNAL AS WELL AS EXTERNAL POLICIES.

2. REFERRING TO THOSE WHO WOULD "SAY AND WRITE THINGS TO HARM SOUTH AFRICA," HE SAID: "ALL I ASK THEM IS TO GIVE SOUTH AFRICA SIX MONTHS. I DO NOT ASK MORE THAN THAT. IF SOUTH AFRICA IS GIVEN THAT CHANCE, THEY WILL BE SURPRISED AT WHERE THE COUNTRY WILL STAND IN SIX TO TWELVE MONTHS' TIME."

3. AT LEAST ONE SOUTH AFRICAN NEWSPAPER, CAPE TOWN'S ARGUS, HAS SEIZED UPON THIS STATEMENT AS PRESAGING "HISTORIC CHANGES." ARGUS GOES ON TO SAY, "SOUTH AFRICA'S MORE THAN 25-MILLION PEOPLE--AND ESPECIALLY ITS FOUR MILLION WHITES--MUST PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR A PERIOD OF UNPRECEDENTED CHANGE." THIS, ARGUS STATES, WAS CLEARLY THE MESSAGE GIVEN BY VORSTER IN HIS SPEECH.

4. COMMENT: IN PUTTING A TIME FRAME AROUND PROMISE OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE, VORSTER HAS GONE ONE STEP FURTHER THAN PIK BOTHA, SOUTH AFRICA'S PERMREP TO THE UN, THOUGH HE WAS NOT NEARLY AS EXPLICIT AS BOTHA WAS IN SUGGESTING THE DIRECTION OF CHANGE AWAY FROM RACIAL DISCRIMINATION. HOWEVER, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF SURPRISING DEGREE OF EUPHORIA WHICH BOT A'S SPEECH ELICITED IN SOME CIRCLES, WE MUST CAUTION THAT VORSTER'S PROMISE OF GOOD THINGS TO COME SHTULD BE TAKEN WITH HEAVY DOSE OF SKEPTICISM. WE HAVE HEARD THIS THEME OF CHANGE FREQUENTLY DURING PAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS, BUT THERE HAVE STILL BEEN NO BASIC CHANGES IN RACE RELATIONS IN THIS COUNTRY. AS SOUTH AFRICA'S FINANCIAL MAIL SAID IN ITS LEAD ARTICLE THIS WEEK, DISCRIMINATION CONTINUES TO BE "AT THE VERY HEART" OF SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY.

5. TRUE, FORCES FOR CHANGE ARE AT WORK, BUT TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE CONSTRAINTS ON CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA--DEEP RACIAL PREJUDICE OF WHITE POUPULACE AS A WHOLE AND THEIR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ABIDING FEAR OF BLACK DOMINATION, THE GOVERNMENT'S WARINESS ABOUT WHITE BACKLASH AGAINST ENLIGHTENED MOVES IN RACE RELATIONS, EXTREMELY NARROW VIEW THAT VORSTER HIMSELF AND MOST OTHER NATIONAL PARTY LEADERS HOLD REGARDING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RACES--IT HARD TO VISUALIZE VORSTER GOVERNMENT MAKING MAJOR, FUNDAMENTAL ALTERATIONS IN RACE SITUATION. MOREOVER, APARTHEID, OR SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT, WILL REMAIN BEDROCK OF POLICY AND AS SUCH WILL CONTINUE TO PLACE

DEFINITE LIMITS ON EXTENT OF CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA. IN
SHORT, VORSTER'S DEFINITION OF CHANGE IS MOST LIKELY QUITE
DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF OTHERS WHO CONCERN THEMSELVES WITH
SOUTH AFRICA'S RACIAL PROBLEMS.
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